



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

GEMS Winchester School

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Acceptable

Read more about the school ➔



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‘Without
challenges,
we won’t feel
the taste of
success and
happiness’



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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School information

General information



Location	Oud Metha
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	Not reported
Website	www.gemseducation.com
Telephone	04-3374112
Address	PO Box 113272
Principal	Lee Davies
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	9 to 12 November 2015

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-15
Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 2 to Year 9
Number of students on roll	3,605
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	59
Number of students with SEND	61
Largest nationality group of students	Indian

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	210
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teaching assistants	60
Teacher-student ratio	1:17
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	52%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	National Curriculum for England / Early Years Foundation Stage
External tests and examinations	CAT4 and INCAS
Accreditation	Not applicable
National Agenda benchmark tests	TIMSS and PISA

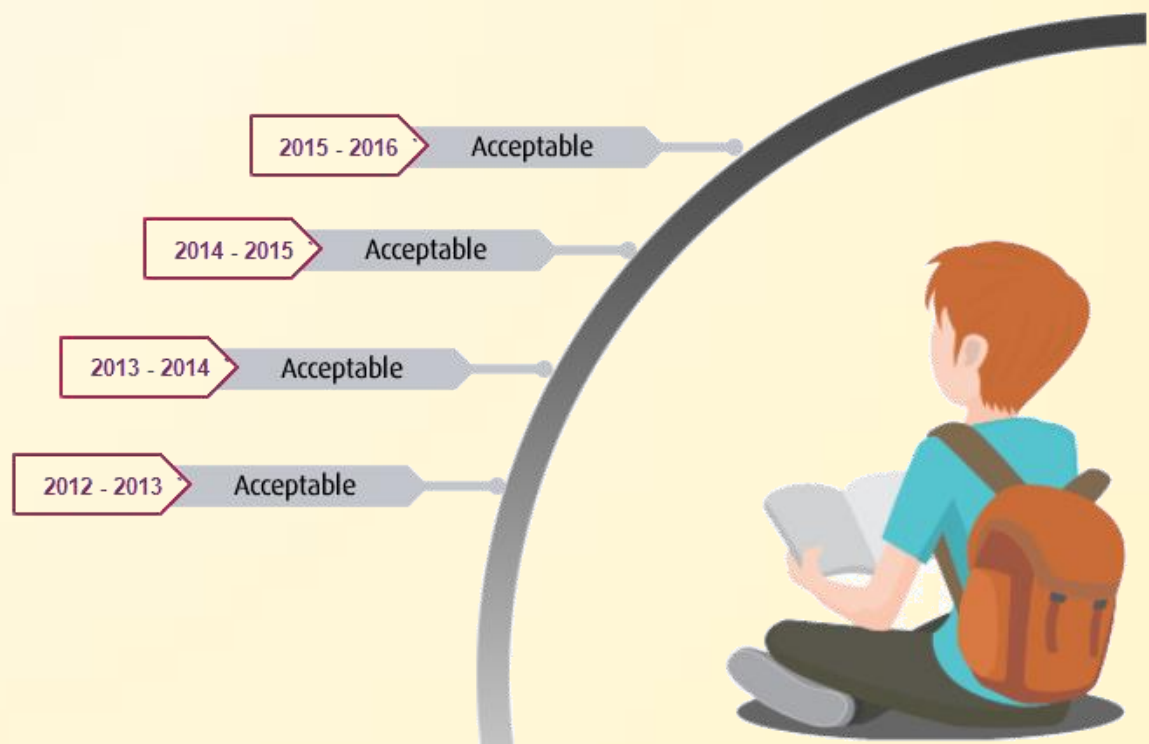


Summary for parents and the community

GEMS Winchester School was inspected by DSIB from 9 to 12 of November 2015. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **acceptable**.

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key standards of performance. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching and the assessment of learning were across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.

The inspection judgements were drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents', teachers' and senior students' surveys.





How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, The Winchester School provided an **acceptable** level of education for its students

- Attainment and progress across the phases and key subject areas were generally acceptable. There were noted weaknesses in Arabic as a first language in the primary and secondary phases, with a similar pattern in secondary in Arabic as an additional language.
- Students were respectful and courteous to their teachers as well as to their colleagues. Students had a good awareness of the diversity of Dubai and appreciated how this was reflected in their life at school.
- Almost all teachers demonstrated adequate, secure subject knowledge. Teacher student interactions were usually supportive and featured a range of questioning and assessment techniques.
- The school followed the National Curriculum of England and the curriculum for the early years in Foundation Stage. Students had access to a relevant, broad and balanced curriculum.
- Deployment to ensure proper supervision was generally effective. Medical records were secure and all health related incidents were consistently tracked.
- The school's leadership at all levels shared a commitment to improving the quality of teaching, learning skills and ultimately students' outcomes. Senior leaders, including the learning coaches, had achieved some successes in raising expectations for the quality of learning and teaching for all students.
- Systematic and rigorous school self-evaluation processes were becoming more embedded in the everyday life in the school. The school and corporate officers worked closely with the parents. The school ran smoothly and there was effective administration of day to day matters.



What did the school do well?

- Students were well motivated, displayed good behaviour and had an enthusiastic attitude to learning.
- Relationships between the students and all adults at the school were good.
- The emphasis on healthy lifestyles and healthy eating, and access to a range of physical activities for all students was a strong feature.
- Good health and safety arrangements were generally in place.
- The commitment, vision and sense of purpose of the school's leaders provided good direction.
- The successful engagement of parents in their children's education was prominent.



What does the school need to do next?

- Drive the agenda for overall school improvement by:
 - reviewing staff recruitment, remuneration and retention issues by governors and leaders
 - increasing efforts to harness good practice exchanges within the GEMS group of schools.
- Improve standards of attainment and progress, in particular in Arabic as a first language.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by
 - more consistent use of appropriate teaching strategies which engage and challenge all groups of learners, including those students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
 - providing training to all staff to ensure they are more effective in helping students learn by focusing on enquiry-based learning and critical thinking.
- Use external and internal assessment information more accurately to inform teaching and modify the curriculum to meet the needs of all students and to improve attainment and progress across all key subjects.
- Ensure the school's self-evaluation, in particular the monitoring of teaching for effective learning, is more accurate and linked closely to the quality of students' experiences, progress and educational outcomes.



How well did the school provide for students with special educational needs and disabilities?

- When students were taught in the Achievement Centre they made good progress. This was because the teachers planned activities that were accurately matched to the levels students were working towards. This did not happen routinely when students worked in their classrooms and so their progress was not always good enough.
- Leaders and managers were beginning to identify where teaching needed improvement so that students made better progress. Some teachers had not received enough support to enable them to plan and deliver lessons that were accurately matched to the students' needs.
- Although some students worked in their classrooms with a shadow teacher, they were often not given activities at the right level. As a result, they did not make adequate progress.
- Children with SEND were identified and assessed so that the teachers who taught them had a better understanding of the difficulties they might experience when learning.
- Parents of children with SEND were pleased with how well their children were achieving. Most felt that their children made better progress when learning in the Achievement Centre.

National Agenda Parameter



In 2014, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, launched the UAE National Agenda 2021, with education being a prime focus. The National Agenda includes two major objectives developed with the intent of placing the UAE among the most successful countries that provide world-class education. By 2021, it is expected that the UAE will feature in the top twenty countries in the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA) test and in the top fifteen countries in the 'Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies' (TIMSS) test.

In response to this, each participating school was issued a report on their students' performance in these international assessments and in addition, they were provided with clear targets for improving their performance. This academic year, KHDA introduced the National Agenda Parameter, which is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress towards achieving their individual National Agenda targets through the use of external benchmarking assessments.

Main points:

- The school did not meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. No information about the progress towards the National Agenda targets was available at the time of inspection.
- The school effectively promoted awareness of the National Agenda to staff and parents and governors knew of its importance. Students were briefed about TIMSS and PISA international assessments. No students had been registered for GL tests in English, mathematics and science, but the school planned to enter students in May 2016.
- Staff had started to align the curriculum in English, mathematics and science to the requirements of the TIMSS and PISA international assessments. For example, science teachers had undertaken a review of the curriculum across the various sciences to match the balance of questions in the TIMSS test. Staff were trying to develop students' critical thinking and enquiry skills more effectively. Much remained to be done.
- Understanding by the staff of what was meant by critical thinking and enquiry was developing. The way in which they questioned students was not sufficiently open ended to promote thinking, analysis and evaluation skills. Enquiry activities usually involved students in following instructions from the teacher, rather than providing opportunities for students to think and design investigations for themselves.
- Students occasionally were asked to find things out for themselves, for example by reading a textbooks. Overall, they did not have enough opportunities to carry out meaningful research on challenging topics, or to make systematic searches using the internet or other information technology resources.

Innovation in education

The *UAE Vision 2021* sets out the National Agenda for the UAE to be among the most innovative nations in the world. The National Innovation Strategy sets the context for 'innovation' and 'innovative leadership'. It provides a basis for evaluating public and private schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.

Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. It is based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, to experiment and to test assumptions as well as questioning and challenging the status quo. Being innovative is about looking beyond what we currently do well, identifying the great ideas of tomorrow and putting them into practice.









Promoting a culture of innovation:

- Recent adaptations to the curriculum and teaching strategies provided more opportunities than reported previously for students to analyse and solve problems, collaborate, persevere, take calculated risks appropriately and learn from failure.

Overall school performance

Acceptable

1. Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Weak	Weak
	Progress	Not applicable	Weak ↓	Weak
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable ↑	Weak
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable ↑	Weak
English 	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics 	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science 	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal development	Good	Good ↑	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Acceptable	Good ↑	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good	Good	Good
Care and support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Acceptable
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Parents and the community	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable



Main inspection report

The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) is responsible for inspecting and reporting on the standards reached by students and the quality of education provided in Dubai's private schools.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale



Using this scale, the *Main inspection report* contains the judgements about the different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school.

It provides the reasons for the answers to the questions in the *Summary for parents and the community*:

- How well did the school perform overall?
- What did the school do well?
- What does the school need to do next?

1. Students' achievement

Foundation Stage

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as a first language	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Acceptable	Acceptable

- In English, attainment measured against curriculum standards and general expectations was acceptable. Some literacy skills were stronger than others. In lessons, speaking and listening skills were broadly in line with expected standards for Foundation Stage children. Children were able to talk confidently about traditional stories and correctly repeated the letter sounds modelled by their teachers. The reading skills of almost all children were underdeveloped. They had begun to recognise letters and blend them into simple words but progress was slow in reading whole sentences and books. In lessons they wrote words under the teacher's guidance but had not started to write short sentences in meaningful contexts.
- In mathematics, at the end of last academic year, only a minority of children in Foundation Stage 2 achieved the early learning goals. In lessons, most children worked at the same basic level and higher attaining children were not doing as well as they could. While children could count objects up to 15, they were unable to apply number skills to solving problems. The practical work that they carried out improved their counting skills but children did not consistently develop their concept of number, for example by applying these skills to real life situations. Children's mathematical vocabulary was increasing, for example by naming and describing shapes such as squares and circles.
- Attainment and progress in science were in line with curriculum standards. In lessons, children were building up a body of knowledge about plants. They could name the parts of plants accurately and what seeds needed in order to germinate and grow. They knew that parts of plants were edible as vegetables and fruit. Some children could give specific examples of leaves, seeds and roots used as food. A few children had begun to develop skills of observation and made use of magnifying glasses to look at various leaves and stems. Progress was similar for different groups.

Primary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Weak	Weak ↓
Arabic as an additional language	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑
English	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Acceptable	Acceptable

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrated in lessons an acceptable level of knowledge of the Principles of Islam, such as praying, and about key Islamic values. They made appropriate progress in understanding the manners expected of a good Muslim in their everyday lives. Only a minority of students, across most grades, demonstrated good levels of Qur'an memorisation and recitation. Internal assessment results did not consistently reflect students' achievement accurately. There were no external assessments to measure students' attainment in this subject. Progress in developing deeper understanding and appreciation of how learning related to daily life was slower for some groups of Arab Muslim students.
- In Arabic as a first language, a large minority of primary students achieved levels that were well below the expected curriculum standards for the subject. Internal assessment results did not always reflect students' achievement accurately and no international benchmarks were used for Arabic as a first language. In their lessons and their work, a majority of students demonstrated reading comprehension levels and writing skills that were in line with expected levels in this phase. Students' oral skills were heavily dominated by colloquial language and a significant proportion of students in the upper primary grades continued to struggle with basic reading and writing skills.
- Most of the students of Arabic as an additional language achieved the level and made progress in line with the curriculum expectations compared to the number of their years of Arabic study. Internal assessment results were very limited and no international assessments were available. In lessons and in their most recent work, most students demonstrated adequate progress in learning new vocabulary which they used to respond to simple questions about themselves and their immediate surroundings, particularly in the lower year groups. They developed their ability to shape, recognise and pronounce Arabic script with some accuracy. However, progress was inconsistent in some classes when teachers' guidance was limited, and when their previous learning was not taken into account when planning lessons.
- Most students attained in line with the English curriculum expectations and international standards. Primary students were developing a good grasp of basic grammar which was reflected in their workbooks and classroom displays. Their listening, reading and speaking skills were in line with expected standards. Many students were keen readers and talked enthusiastically about books they had read in school or when using the internet package MYON in school or at home with parents and guardians. Most students with SEND attained in line with expectations both in class and school tests. Gifted and talented students did not attain as highly as could have been expected.

- In mathematics, students including those with SEND, made acceptable progress over time from their starting points. For example, students in Year 1 could measure lengths using non-standard units and most students made expected progress in acquiring knowledge and techniques in shape. By Year 5, they could calculate the perimeter of shapes involving rectangles. Students did not have sufficient opportunities to explore things for themselves, and so did not fully make progress in gaining enquiry skills. For example, older students struggled in an investigation about the maximum area that could be enclosed by a given perimeter. Students in Year 4 performed well in drawing up and interpreting simple tables and graphs. Overall, most students made expected progress and attained in line with curriculum standards, but only a few in each year showed attainment ahead of those expectations.
- Students showed enthusiasm and interest in their science lessons. Even the youngest students were able to work in groups identifying a variety of everyday materials or different types of food. Older students taught by subject specialists conducted age-appropriate experiments related to a number of science topics including electricity and circuitry. Most students demonstrated a good understanding of scientific concepts, ideas and vocabulary and were able to employ reason and observation in their lessons but their critical thinking and problem solving skills were still developing and less secure. Recent final examination information showed most primary students at the expected level in their science classes.

Secondary

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Weak	Weak
Arabic as an additional language	Weak	Weak
English	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Acceptable	Acceptable

- In Islamic education, most students developed acceptable knowledge of Seera. They developed their understanding of the importance of Zakah and were beginning to explore how it could address the problem of poverty in their community. Students' recitation and understanding of the Qur'an verses they learnt needed further development. Only a minority of the small number of Arab Muslims could recite Ayat Al Korsi, which they had studied, to an acceptable level of accuracy and their application of recitation rules was limited. Internal assessment lacked rigour and therefore did not reflect students' achievement accurately enough in relation to the curriculum standards. Progress was slightly better for non-Arab Muslims.
- Secondary students of Arabic as a first language made limited progress overall in the key skills of the language. In lessons and in their recent work, only a half of the students could read age-appropriate texts and identify key ideas independently. In writing skills, a large minority of students could not write at length and made frequent basic errors. Progress over time, for the majority of students, was heavily impeded by the lack of guidance and support from teachers. Internal assessments were not sufficiently aligned to the curriculum standards and did not reflect students' true achievement levels. Most of the students with gaps in their learning made modest progress in their reading and writing skills.

- Students of Arabic as an additional language made limited progress over time in relation to the expected levels. Students' progress in developing the key skills of the language was limited by the quality of the curriculum and its modification to suit the different learning needs of students. Over time and in relation to their starting points, only a minority of students managed to develop the ability to converse in simple Arabic about a limited range of topics. A significant proportion of students lacked basic vocabulary to communicate their own ideas. Teachers' instructions were frequently reliant on the use of difficult language that was well above the level of students' attainment. There were no external assessments used by the school in this subject.
- Attainment against English curriculum standards was acceptable in each year group and had remained consistent over the past three years. Secondary students were fluent speakers and their writing showed a good grasp of basic grammar which they used accurately and precisely in their extended writing. Their listening, reading and comprehension skills were in line with expected national and international standards. Senior students enthusiastically took part in debates in the English Club and through organised class and stage debates. Most students made expected progress in lessons and internal examinations. Progress of students with SEND was in line with expectations. Gifted and talented students did not attain as highly as could have been expected.
- Students enjoyed making progress and acquiring mathematical knowledge and understanding about a widening range of calculations and formulae, for example for finding the circumference of a circle, or the surface area of three-dimensional shapes. Year 9 students were able to work out for themselves, with prompting, the best way to calculate the surface area of a pyramid. In doing this they had to reason and use various properties of triangles. Students were not always given challenging tasks to make them think for themselves, and, as a result, did not make expected progress. In teacher-designed tests which were aligned to the standards in the English National Curriculum, most students performed in line with expectations. Attainment at the primary and secondary phases had been broadly stable over the last few years.
- Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 studied chemistry, biology and physics and demonstrated a good understanding of key concepts, theories and ideas in science. They knew facts and vocabulary related to various topics. Their ability to apply knowledge in real life situations was not, however, particularly secure. Their critical thinking and problem solving skills were developing but not yet at a high level. Project work was often undertaken and of good quality; the opportunities for conducting in-depth and rigorous research were limited. Most students were very comfortable in the laboratories and knew about safety. They were able to design and conduct simple experiments, make observations, record results and draw conclusions. Recent final examination results showed students scoring at the expected levels.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Children in the Foundation Stage collaborated well, for example when making pictures about a well-known story and linking their learning to the outside world. For example they could talk about beans they were growing, but knew that in the story of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, the beans were magic beans.
- In the primary and secondary phases, students exhibited positive attitudes. They were engaging and taking responsibility for their work, particularly in mathematics and science. They were often unsure as to how to improve their work. Those taking Arabic as an additional language engaged when the task set by the teacher was clear and matched the students' needs and abilities.
- Critical thinking and problem solving skills were underdeveloped features of learning as teachers focused on knowledge acquisition. Students used learning technologies in limited ways. Many did not have a hand-held devices and were not able to engage in research-based activities. In science lessons, most students were well versed in research skills and had fairly well developed problem solving skills.
- Students made some connections between subjects. Links to the real world were planned, but too often these were not made in lessons. Students in upper secondary successfully related events in the wider world to their lives. Although attempts were made in primary and lower secondary to link learning to the real world, these were at too simplistic levels, for example identifying objects in the shape of cuboids.
- Students' interaction and skills in collaborating and communicating varied across subjects and phases. Science students interacted purposefully and productively in a range of situations. There were too few specific opportunities created for the development of collaborative skills amongst the students.

2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal development	Good	Good ↑	Good

- Students were respectful and courteous to their teachers as well as to their colleagues. They demonstrated strong commitment to learning across all phases; they responded positively to feedback and participated actively in the school extra-curricular activities. The school's self-identification programmes were successful in improving the students' self-reliance and confidence.
- Students spoke confidently on the school radio station, in assembly and with teachers in the classrooms. They were well aware of how to live safely and healthily. They made good choices about food they bought from the school canteen. Many students also participated actively in the school sports activities before and after school.
- High levels of self-discipline prevailed consistently across all levels of the school. Attendance across the school was acceptable. The school was focusing on increasing attendance levels across all phases, particularly the primary phase.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Acceptable	Good ↑	Good

- Students had good awareness of the diversity of Dubai and appreciated how this was reflected in their life at school. This awareness enabled them to interact very well with others. Almost all students had a sound interest in making comparisons between the habits and customs of people from different cultures and their own.
- Across most age groups, students demonstrated a firm understanding of how Islamic values influenced their daily lives in Dubai and the UAE. Students, particularly the girls, talked positively about how these values influenced their dress, habits, manners and relationships with others.
- Most students had a good awareness of the Emirati heritage and culture. They talked about UAE history and what they learnt from their visits to local museums. Students had good knowledge about traditions, food and popular activities.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good

- Students demonstrated a strong interest in their study and took great pride in their work. When given the opportunity, they readily shared their good ideas about how they could improve their work, their school and their community.
- Students demonstrated good awareness of their responsibilities towards their school and beyond. Many readily took on different roles of responsibility, such as serving as monitors, and actively promoting positive attitudes amongst their peers. They actively engaged in most of the initiatives organised by the school to benefit their community.
- Students took great care of their school and kept it clean. They were fully aware of the importance of conserving water and energy and older students linked it to what they learnt in science about natural resources. They had good awareness of the impact of traffic and new construction on the local environment.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Almost all teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge. When this subject knowledge was combined with an understanding of how students learned, then most students made acceptable or better progress in lessons.
- Interactions between staff and students were supportive. While questioning in the secondary phase encouraged students to engage in meaningful discussions, too often the questioning in primary was mainly concerned with the checking of understanding and the recall of facts. In the best lessons, teachers enabled students to talk together to share their thinking. The best questioning was evident in English and science lessons in secondary.
- Teachers generally provided too few learning opportunities for students to develop problem solving skills. Some lessons in secondary English provided examples, but these developments were in their early stages and not embedded in teaching practice across the school. Teachers had not provided sufficient opportunities for students to access research and technology to support their learning.
- While most teachers used a range of strategies to engage students, they were not routinely successful in securing good learning. Students did not apply their learning to the real world and the promotion of critical thinking, though varied, was inadequate through the school as a whole.
- Lesson planning generally included learning objectives; these were often too general or not clear. Objectives did not focus specifically on what students of different abilities were to learn and which skills they needed to develop. Lack of efficient and effective differentiation and time management in lessons meant that the needs of students were not met well. Learning was not sufficiently focused.
- The teaching of Arabic as a first language and as an additional language was too limited in the range of techniques that teachers employed. Consequently students did not make the progress they were capable of in the four strands of the subjects.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Assessment	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Adequately detailed and specific information about individual students was available to teachers; it was frequently under-used when planning. As a result the needs of some groups of students particularly those of higher and lower ability were often not met. Differentiated instruction was better planned than implemented.
- Internal assessment processes were not benchmarked against external tests. External tests had been taken by student for the first time the previous year and the school was awaiting the results. CAT4 and INCAS were used, but these provided only prediction for potential for success. Consideration was being given to using PIRLS, but no decision had been made.
- Solid internal assessment processes were in place. Comprehensive examinations were conducted three times a year with teachers and school leaders receiving information on students' progress and skills development.

- Overall teachers knew their students well and provided appropriate oral feedback on students' performance in lessons. They were not as strong in providing feedback in the marking of students' work. For the most part, marking consisted of ticks to acknowledge that work had been completed but was not sufficiently detailed in identifying the next steps students needed to take to improve.
- Although self-assessment by students was part of a minority of lessons it was underdeveloped as was the use of assessment generally to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Nevertheless, the tracking of students' progress and the development of their skills was improving and had become more consistent than previously.

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable

- In the Foundation Stage, 'free flow' had been introduced and provided opportunities for children to make choices. Both Arabic as a first and additional language were considered weak in curriculum design and provision. This was characterised by limited choice, narrow curricular options and being overly-prescriptive. There were no science electives at secondary level.
- In the Foundation Stage teachers planned for some links between curricular. Cross-curricular links between key subjects in other phases were often inconsistent. There were some useful links between UAE culture and heritage, and reading lessons in Arabic as a first language. Lesson planning often identified cross-curricular opportunities but these were not implemented regularly as a clear aspect of the provision.
- The school followed the National Curriculum of England and the curriculum of the early years Foundation Stage. Students accessed a broad and balanced curriculum. In science, the development of knowledge, skills and understanding was more effectively planned and placed when designing the curriculum than in other subjects.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Whilst there was recognition of the needs of different groups of students, the curriculum had not been sufficiently modified to meet the needs of all students, including those with SEND and the gifted and talented.
- Enhancement, enterprise and innovation were limited in the school. The digital learning activities such as the Radio Station, The Tech Shack, Virtual Tours and Virtual Visitors were examples of innovative learning experiences for the students.
- Extra-curricular activities were provided though these were fee-based and therefore not accessible to all students. Some students participated in community projects, which benefitted the students and the community.

- The curriculum at the different phases had a few programmes which enhanced the students' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the culture and heritage of the UAE. In Foundation Stage the curriculum included themes such as clothes, special events, famous buildings and the leaders as appropriate for their age. Reading materials addressed themes such as the desert in the UAE and modern daily life in Dubai.

5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good	Good	Good

- Safety and hygiene checks for staff and students were well managed. Deployment to ensure proper supervision was effective. Students using the school transportation service did so safely. Access and departure to the buildings were good. These efforts, however, were often hindered by a number of private vehicle drivers who parked irresponsibly and dangerously on the main road for drop off or pick up.
- Exit routes such as corridors, stairways, doorways, outdoor routes and assembly areas were clear and free from obstructions. Emergency evacuation plans and appropriate warning signs were visible. The facilities were adequately accessible for all and the school had made suitable provision at ground floor level to accommodate those with physical disability.
- The school successfully promoted healthy living through actively engaging students, staff and, at times, parents in a variety of ongoing awareness raising and sporting activities. These included the 'Early Run' programme, regular BMI checks and monitoring of dietary and fitness plans. Effective decisions were taken about the quality of the food provided in the school's canteen. Students made informed choices about their food habits.
- Medical records were secure and health related incidents were consistently tracked. There were clear procedures for medical referrals and interventions. Maintenance records including fire extinguishers and hose reels were up to date.
- The school effectively provided for a caring and protective environment for students. Policies and procedures to ensure child protection, including those related to cyber safety were well promoted and consolidated among the school community. Some of the students who made use of their own devices in lessons or during recess demonstrated clear understanding of the implications the internet and social media had if used inappropriately.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Care and support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

- Relationships between adults and students were good. Behaviour was generally good especially in the secondary phase. In Foundation Stage and primary, students were respectful towards their teachers; however, behaviour management was not consistent in all classes. At times, teachers did not manage students well as they moved around the classroom.
- There were thorough procedures for encouraging students to arrive at school on time and attend regularly. Parents were immediately informed by text messaging if their child was absent. Students who arrived late knew they had to report to a member of staff and gain a note before going into class. However, there was little to indicate that these procedures were improving attendance and punctuality.
- The quality of support that students with SEND received was too variable. The Achievement Centre allowed students with SEND to focus on their targets in their individual plans and develop literacy, mathematics and personal skills. These students made good progress.
- When students were supported in their classrooms, by the class teacher, a shadow teacher or assistant, the quality of support they received varied from good to weak. This was because teachers did not consistently use assessment information collected on individuals when they planned and taught their lessons.
- Gifted and talented students were beginning to be identified and were offered activities out of lesson time, which were generally better matched to the needs of the younger students than those offered in lessons. Gifted and talented students were identified and offered activities to work on outside lesson times. There was rarely any reference to their needs in teachers' lesson plans.
- There were clear procedures to monitor the personal, social and well-being of students. Students had direct links with their class teachers and heads of year. The counsellor offered additional support when necessary. Older students began to learn about the world of work through visitors to school, such as local business people. They took part in projects and work experience, alongside their parents, during school holidays.

Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities	Acceptable
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- The leadership and management of the Achievement Centre was good and enabled students to learn well. However, in classrooms, teachers did not consistently plan activities that were accurately matched to the needs of the students identified with SEND. As a result, these students' rates of progress were too variable and ranged from good to weak.
- Leaders and managers had started to monitor the quality of teaching with a view to provision for students with SEND; this had yet to impact significantly on students' progress. Teachers had not received adequate support or training to enable them to match activities to the needs of the students with SEND in their classes.
- Although some students received additional support in their classes, progress was often impeded because some teachers did not use assessment information to plan activities at the correct level.

- All staff were involved in the identification process for students with SEND. Following accurate identification students were categorised into different groups based on the severity of their need. Almost all staff were aware of this information.
- Parents expressed satisfaction with the progress their children made. However, there were some concerns about the appropriateness of the provision received by some children.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Acceptable

- The school's leadership at all levels shared a commitment to improving the quality of teaching, learning skills and ultimately students' outcomes, but with limited accomplishment in practice.
- In-school training and growing distributive leadership promoted some forward momentum. Positive steps were being taken to establish a professional culture throughout the school with high standards being the focal point.
- There were good relationships at all levels and a sense of a school community. The senior leadership team sought to improve communications between the various levels of leadership and had focused on heightening the empowerment and accountability of those in leadership positions.
- Leaders at all levels had a shared understanding of what needed to be done to improve the school; the majority had reflected and formed clear innovative ideas for further embedding the good and developing aspects of practice. The school's leadership demonstrated sufficient capacity to make required improvements.
- Senior leaders, including the learning coaches, had achieved some successes in raising expectations for the quality of learning and teaching for all students. The retention of successful teachers remained a challenging issue for the school to address.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic and rigorous school self-evaluation processes were becoming more embedded in the everyday life in the school. Most staff engaged positively in the various information gathering activities, for example lesson observations, data analysis, surveys, and self-review of teaching. • Performance management targets, integrated within the school's development planning supported leaders' efforts at all levels in implementing the school improvement agenda. Positive impact of these targets and support on students' learning outcomes had yet to be more fully realised. • The school's improvement plan included an evaluation of progress towards the previous year's targets. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and impact of each priority were under-developed. • The school had introduced a mentoring programme to support all members of the teaching staff to raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and inform professional development needs. Remuneration, recruitment and retention issues seriously impeded the leadership's ability to speed up more improvements. 	




Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a functional parent committee 'Parents of Winchester' working in partnership with the school was improving relationships, communication and feeding into the school's improvement planning. The parent liaison executive provided a dedicated link to parent-school relations. • Eight 'hubs' had been established to enable parents to engage with school staff on various aspects of the school's projects, for example 'learning skills' and the National Agenda. The dedicated corporate phone-line for parents was available for them to raise issues and parents were guaranteed a response from the school within 48 hours. • Parents received two written reports per school year on their children's academic progress; there were also helpful meetings between parents and teachers to discuss both personal and academic issues in greater detail. Parents of children in the Foundation Stage had the opportunity to engage in a new 'learning profile' building activity. • Parents spoke of links between the school and other schools and businesses that were partnered effectively to widen students' real life experiences. For example, there are virtual tours of organisations and guest speakers. There were good sporting links and family events, plus events for parental engagement and workshops. 	

Governance	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with parents using a variety of effective tools enabled the school and corporate officers to work in partnership. The principal and senior leadership team benefited from the links with other principals in GEMS schools, it provided opportunities for information and practice exchange. The strategic and advisory aspects of the governance role included holding the professional leadership of the school to account for its performance. New corporate level appointments of senior vice presidents had taken place to ensure that a system of adequate and comprehensive support was provided which was linked tightly to the school's needs. The ownership had recently appointed a vice-principal and three full-time learning coaches. There were still significant shortcomings and limitations on the ability of the school to be able to recruit appropriately experienced staff. This was having a detrimental impact on the school leadership's ability to achieve more improvements and meeting previous inspection recommendations. 	

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school ran smoothly with effective administration of day-to-day matters. Policies and procedures were in place and well understood. Maintenance and transport contracts were all in place and appropriately monitored to give a good level of service. Almost all teachers had degree level qualifications; a small minority also held a teaching qualification. Professional training was available during induction periods and through continuous in-house support from GEMS coaching staff. The extent, depth of knowledge and experience of the English National Curriculum was inconsistent across the teaching staff. The premises were safe and secure with pleasant and stimulating Foundation Stage external play areas. The provision of ramps ensured access for visitors at ground floor level. A good range of specialist rooms and facilities included an artificially grassed soccer pitch and shaded netball courts. Premises were well maintained and clean. Some classrooms were too cramped for the number of students in them. The senior library was dated, uninspiring and not user-friendly. Whilst students were now encouraged to use MYON resources software, the library did not offer sufficient work terminals for students during the school day. Classroom resources were variable in quality and quantity, and used inconsistently. Most learning bases had ceiling projector resources which were used primarily by the teachers. 	

The views of the parents, teachers and students

Before the inspection, the views of the parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form inspection judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
Parents* 	2015-2016	1362
	2014-2015	494
Teachers 	121	
Students 	0	

*The number of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

- Responses from parents had improved significantly from last year with almost half of the parents now responding. Almost all parents who took part in the survey were generally positive about the school.
- Parents with children with SEND were very pleased with the support provided by the school. Most parents were satisfied with the quality of education and felt their children were making good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Almost all parents felt that school reports and parent/teacher meetings ensured they were kept well informed about their child's progress.
- Over half of the parents who responded did not know whether or not their children were making good progress in learning Arabic as an additional language or whether or not their children were improving their understanding of Islam.
- Almost half of the parents who responded expressed concerns over the quality of the teachers of Arabic as an additional language. Almost all parents agreed that their children enjoyed school, were well looked after and kept safe.
- Most parents said that the school was well led. Both parents and teachers felt that there was a need for the school to devote more time to teaching children about the need for them to be environmentally aware.
- Almost all staff expressed satisfaction with most aspects of the school. They felt children were well behaved and responded positively in class.

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report, you should contact inspection@khda.gov.ae